

Existing law provides for the screening of every child in kindergarten through third grade for the existence of impediments to a successful school experience. Includes in such impediments dyslexia and related disorders as defined in R.S. 17:7(11), attention deficit disorder, and certain social and environmental factors.

Prior law required that such screenings be done by elementary guidance counselors or by teachers under their supervision, or by other professional employees of the school system who have been appropriately trained and specifies that all such persons shall be included within the term "guidance counselor" as used in prior law.

New law modifies prior law by adding pupil appraisal personnel to list of persons to do screenings and deleting requirement that teachers shall be supervised by guidance counselors in doing such screenings. Also deletes requirement that guidance counselors, teachers, and other professional employees be included in the term "guidance counselor". New law retains existing law that prohibits screenings from being done by persons who have not been trained as required by BESE.

New law adds requirement that all elementary guidance counselors, pupil appraisal personnel, teachers, or other trained professional employees shall operate as advocates for the children identified as needing services or assistance pursuant to existing law.

Prior law prohibited elementary guidance counselors or other professionals who provide screenings and operate as advocates to children needing services from being assigned administrative or other duties that interfere with the providing of such screenings or the operation as advocates.

New law deletes prior law.

Prior law required each city and parish school board to employ at least one certified school counselor for every 800 students in the elementary schools. Provided that BESE shall provide for the qualifications for certification of such guidance counselors which shall include training in providing screenings as required in existing law. Required BESE to insure that all counselors and teachers doing screenings receive training.

New law repeals prior law.

Prior law provided that elementary guidance counselors shall operate as advocates for children needing services pursuant to existing law. Required such counselors to work with teachers of such children in providing services to the children. Further required such counselors to work with all available community resources to provide assistance in meeting the needs of the children.

New law repeals prior law.

Prior law permitted gradual implementation of prior law and required full implementation of prior law provisions by the 1998-1999 school year.

New law deletes prior law.

Existing law provides that implementation costs shall be covered by funds appropriated by the state including those appropriated pursuant to the MFP.

New law retains existing law.

Effective July 1, 1999.

(Amends R.S. 17:392.1(E) and 392.3; Repeals R.S. 17:392.2)